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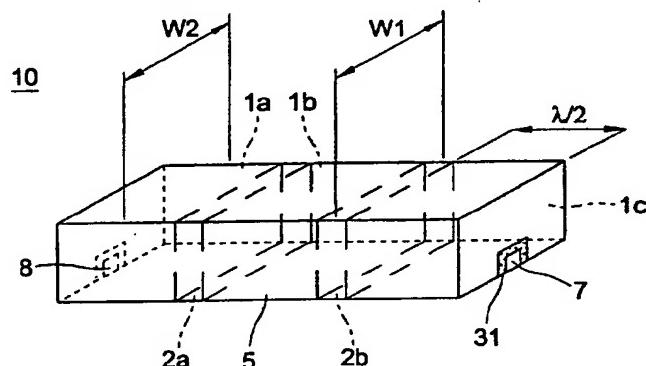
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### (54) Dielectric filter and dielectric duplexer

(57) A dielectric filter (10) is formed of resonators (1a,b,c) connected in series with dielectric coupling windows (2a,b) disposed therebetween. When the dielectric constant of the dielectrics (21) which form the dielectric coupling windows (2a,b) is made different from that of the dielectrics (11) which form the resona-

tors (1a,b,c), the dielectric filter (10) having the same central frequency and a different pass-band width is manufactured without changing the shape and dimensions of the dielectric coupling windows (2a,b).

FIG.1



**Description****BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to dielectric filters and dielectric duplexers, and more particularly, to a dielectric filter used for a communication unit in the microwave band and millimeter-wave band.

2. Description of the Related Art

As a conventional dielectric filter used for a communication unit in the microwave band and the millimeter-wave band, there has been known a multiple-stage filter in which dielectrics having a low dielectric constant sandwich a plurality of TEM-mode coaxial resonators (see Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication No. 2-94903). In this dielectric filter, a TEM-mode coaxial resonator in each stage independently functions as a resonator.

Since a communication unit using such a filter has handled higher-frequency signals as more channels have been demanded, when a high-frequency signal (such as in the 3-GHz band) is applied to a dielectric filter formed of a plurality of TEM-mode coaxial resonators, a no-load Q value is greatly reduced and a passing loss increases.

To overcome the above problems, there have been proposed a waveguide-type dielectric filter 40 in the TE<sub>10</sub> mode shown in Fig. 11 for example. This dielectric filter 40 has three TE<sub>10</sub>-mode resonators 51 and two dielectric coupling windows 52. The TE<sub>10</sub>-mode resonators 51 are connected in series with the dielectric coupling windows 52 disposed therebetween.

The resonators 51 and the dielectric coupling windows 52 are formed of a dielectric block 41 made from one material and having almost a rectangular-parallelepiped shape, on which an outer conductive member 43 is provided to cover almost the entire surface of the dielectric block 41. A pair of input and output electrodes 45 not electrically connected to the outer conductive member 43 with the specified clearance left between the electrodes 45 and the member 43 is provided at both ends of the dielectric block 41. To set the central frequency of each resonator 51 to the desired value, the length of each resonator 51 needs to be set to almost half the wavelength  $\lambda$  of the central-frequency signal. To set the pass-band width of the dielectric filter 40 to the desired value, it is necessary to set the width W1 of the dielectric coupling windows 52 appropriately.

Although the proposed dielectric filter has a high no-load Q value and a small loss at a high frequency band, however, since the resonators 51 and the dielectric coupling windows 52 are made from the same dielectric material in the conventional dielectric filter, they have the same dielectric constant. Therefore, in order to

manufacture a plurality of dielectric filters having the same central frequency and different pass-band widths, the width W1 of the dielectric coupling windows 52 needs to be changed and thereby the shape or the dimensions of the dielectric block 41 are changed. A forming metal die is required for each of the plurality of dielectric filters.

There is a method for manufacturing a plurality of dielectric filters having different pass-band widths with the same forming metal die. A rectangular-parallelepiped dielectric block is formed by a forming metal die and two pairs of grooves opposing with the specified gap set therebetween are formed on both sides of the dielectric block by cutting with a dicing saw. A portion sandwiched between one pair of grooves in the dielectric block serves as a dielectric coupling window. To manufacture a plurality of dielectric filters having the same central frequency and different pass-band widths, it is also necessary in this method to change the blade-feeding distance (which equals the depth of the groove) of the dicing saw to modify the width of the dielectric coupling window for each of the plurality of dielectric filters.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

Accordingly, it is an object of the present invention to provide a dielectric filter and a dielectric duplexer in which the pass-band width can be changed without modifying its shape and dimensions.

The foregoing object is achieved through the provision of a dielectric filter or a dielectric duplexer in which the dielectric constant of the dielectrics which form TE-mode resonators is different from that of the dielectric which forms a dielectric coupling window.

With the shape and dimensions of the dielectric coupling window not being changed, when the dielectric constant of the dielectric which forms the dielectric coupling window is set larger than that of the dielectrics which form the resonators, the amount of coupling between adjacent resonators increases and thereby the pass-band width of the dielectric filter increases. Conversely, with the shape and dimensions of the dielectric coupling window not being changed, when the dielectric constant of the dielectric which forms the dielectric coupling window is set smaller than that of the dielectrics which form the resonators, the amount of coupling between adjacent resonators decreases and thereby the pass-band width of the dielectric filter is reduced.

According to the present invention, the dielectric constant of the dielectric which forms the dielectric coupling window is made different from that of the dielectrics which form the TE-mode resonators, a dielectric filter or a dielectric duplexer having the same central frequency and a different pass-band width is obtained without changing the shape and dimensions of the dielectric coupling window.

As a result, a dielectric filter having the same central frequency and a different pass-band width is

obtained at the same dimensions with the same shape by the use of the same forming metal die. Therefore, the number of the types of forming metal dies is substantially reduced, and thereby manufacturing cost is reduced.

#### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a dielectric filter according to a first embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 2 is an exploded perspective view of the dielectric filter shown in Fig. 1.

Fig. 3 is an exploded perspective view of a dielectric filter according to a second embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 4 is an exploded perspective view of a dielectric duplexer according to an embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a dielectric duplexer of Fig. 4.

Fig. 6 is a perspective view of a dielectric filter according to another embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 7 is an exploded perspective view of a dielectric filter according to still another embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 8 is an exploded perspective view of a dielectric filter according to yet another embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 9 is a perspective view of a dielectric filter according to yet another embodiment of the present invention.

Fig. 10 is an enlarged sectional view of the coupling adjustment holes of the dielectric filter of Fig. 9.

Fig. 11 is a perspective view of a conventional dielectric filter.

#### DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Dielectric filters according to embodiments of the present invention will be described below by referring to the accompanying drawings. In each embodiment, the same symbols are assigned to the same components or the same portions.

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a dielectric filter according to a first embodiment of the present invention. A dielectric filter 10 has a rectangular cross section and includes three TE<sub>10</sub>-mode resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c, and two dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b. The resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c are connected in series as a unit with the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b disposed therebetween. In order to set the central frequency of the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c to the desired value, the length of the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c is almost set to half the wavelength  $\lambda$  of the central-frequency signal.

The resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c, and the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b are formed as follows: As shown in Fig. 2, dielectrics 11 for the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c and dielectrics 21 for the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b are prepared. The dielectrics 11 and 21 are made from dielectric powder kneaded with a binder to make slurry, shaped, and dried. The dielectrics 11 and 21 have different dielectric constants. The dielectrics 11 and 21 are disposed in a forming metal die such that the dielectrics 11 sandwich the dielectrics 21. Heat and pressure are applied to the dielectrics 11 and 21 by the forming metal die. They are baked as a unit to form a rectangular-parallelepiped dielectric block 31. As shown in Fig. 1, an outer conductive member 5 is formed so as to cover almost the entire surface of the baked dielectric block 31. At both ends of the dielectric block 31, one pair of input and output electrodes 7 and 8 not electrically connected to the outer conductive member 5 with the specified clearance set between the electrodes and the outer conductive member 5 is formed.

As described above, the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c are formed of the dielectrics 11 and the outer conductive member 5 provided on the outer surface of the dielectrics 11, and the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b are formed of the dielectrics 21 and the outer conductive member 5 provided on the outer surface of the dielectrics 21. In the first embodiment, the width W1 of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b is set equal to the width W2 of the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c.

The obtained dielectric filter 10 has a different structure from that of the conventional multiple-stage filter in which dielectrics having a low dielectric constant sandwich a TEM-mode coaxial resonator independent in each stage. In other words, the TE<sub>10</sub>-mode resonators 1a to 1c in the dielectric filter 10 function in the same way as a waveguide serving as a transfer area. The dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b of the dielectric filter 10 function in the same way as a waveguide serving as a blocking area. In a waveguide, it is necessary in general to partition the waveguide serving as a transfer area at both end faces with electromagnetic boundaries having a large reflection coefficient in order to trigger resonance.

Therefore, if the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b of the dielectric filter 10 are made from a dielectric material having the same dielectric constant as that of a dielectric material forming the resonators 1a to 1c, boundaries having a large reflection coefficient are provided at both ends of the dielectric filter 10, namely, at the outer end face of each of the resonators 1a and 1c. The dielectric filter 10 serves as a filter having a one-stage resonator.

On the other hand, in the dielectric filter 10 according to the first embodiment, the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b are made from a dielectric material having a different dielectric constant from that of a dielectric material forming the resonators 1a to 1c. The resonators 1a to 1c sandwich members having a different

dielectric constant, and thereby the resonators 1a to 1c function as resonators and the filter serves as a filter having a three-stage resonator. As described above, the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b function as electromagnetic boundaries having a large reflection coefficient for the resonators 1a to 1c as well as are electromagnetically coupled with the resonators 1a to 1c.

In the dielectric filter 10 configured as described above, when the dielectric constant of the dielectrics 21 which form the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b is set larger than that of the dielectrics 11 which form the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c, the amount of coupling between the resonators 1a and 1b and that between the resonators 1b and 1c increase. Therefore, the pass-band width of the dielectric filter 10 increases. Conversely, when the dielectric constant of the dielectrics 21 which form the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b is set smaller than that of the dielectrics 11 which form the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c, the amount of coupling between the resonators 1a and 1b and that between the resonators 1b and 1c are reduced, and thereby the pass-band width of the dielectric filter is reduced. As a result, even if the shape or the dimensions of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b are not changed, when the dielectric constant of the dielectrics 21 which form the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b is made different from that of the dielectrics 11 which form the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c, the dielectric filter 10 has the same central frequency and a different pass-band width. Since a dielectric filter having the same central frequency and a different pass-band width can be manufactured by the use of the same forming metal die, the number of the types of forming metal dies is substantially reduced, and manufacturing cost can be reduced.

Fig. 3 is an exploded perspective view of a dielectric filter according to a second embodiment of the present invention. A dielectric filter 10 includes three TE<sub>10</sub>-mode resonators 61a, 61b, and 61c, and two dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b. The resonators 61a, 61b, and 61c are connected in series with the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b disposed therebetween. The dielectric filter 10 has substantially the same structure as that shown in Fig. 1 in the first embodiment.

The resonators 61a, 61b, and 61c, and the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b are formed as follows: Unbaked dielectrics 71a to 71c for the resonators 61a, 61b, and 61c and unbaked dielectrics 81a and 81b for the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b are prepared. The dielectrics 71a to 71c and 81a and 81b have different dielectric constants. The unbaked dielectrics 71a to 71c and 81a and 81b are put into a forming metal die separately. Heat and pressure are applied to the dielectrics 71a to 71c and 81a and 81b by the forming metal die to bake them. Since the dielectric constant of the dielectrics 21 which form the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b has been made different from that of the dielectrics 11 which form the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c, even if the shape or the

dimensions of the dielectrics 21 are not changed, the dielectric filter 10 has the same central frequency and a different pass-band width. Therefore, the dielectrics 21 can be manufactured with the use of the same forming metal die, and thereby the number of the types of forming metal dies is substantially reduced.

An outer conductive member 5 is formed so as to cover the entire surface of the baked dielectrics 11 except for surfaces to be contact with the dielectrics 21 and portions where input and output electrodes 7 and 8 are formed. An outer conductive member 5 is also formed so as to cover the surface of the baked dielectrics 21 except for surfaces to be contact with the dielectrics 11.

The dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b are disposed between the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c. The resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c are bonded to the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b with insulating adhesive such as glass glaze applied to each contact surface to form a dielectric filter. The dielectric filter may be formed such that the baked dielectrics 11 and 21 are bonded together with insulating adhesive in advance to form a rectangular-parallelepiped dielectric block, and then the outer conductive member 5 is formed on the surface of the dielectric block so as to cover almost the dielectric block.

A dielectric duplexer according to a third embodiment will be described below, which is used for a mobile communication unit such as an automobile phone and a portable phone. As shown in Fig. 4, a dielectric duplexer 60 includes three TE<sub>10</sub>-mode resonators 61a, 61b, and 61c, and two dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b. The resonators 61a to 61c are connected in series as a unit with the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b disposed therebetween. The width W1 of the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b is set smaller than the width W2 of the resonators 61a to 61c. It is needless to say that the width W1 of the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b may be set equal to the width W2 of the resonators 61a to 61c.

The resonators 61a to 61c and the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b are formed as follows: Unbaked dielectrics 71a to 71c for the resonators 61a to 61c and unbaked dielectrics 81a and 81b for the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b are prepared. The dielectric constant of the dielectrics 81a and 81b is different from that of the dielectrics 71a to 71c. In the dielectric 71b, two external coupling holes 72a and 72b passing through the upper and lower surfaces thereof are formed. Lead through holes 73a and 73b perpendicular to the two external coupling holes 72a and 72b, respectively, are also formed.

The unbaked dielectrics 71a to 71c, 81a, and 81b are put into a forming metal die separately. Heat and pressure are applied to the dielectrics 71a to 71c, 81a, and 81b by the forming metal die to bake them. Since the dielectric constant of the dielectrics 81a and 81b which form the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b

has been made different from that of the dielectrics 71a to 71c which form the resonators 61a to 61c, even if the shape or the dimensions of the dielectrics 81a and 81b is not changed, the dielectric duplexer 60 has the same central frequency and a different pass-band width. Therefore, the dielectrics 81a and 81b can be manufactured with the use of the same forming metal die, and thereby the number of the types of forming metal dies is substantially reduced.

An outer conductive member 65 is formed so as to cover the surfaces of the sintered dielectrics 71a to 71c except for portions in contact with the dielectrics 81a and 81b, a transmitting electrode Tx and a receiving electrode Rx serving as input and output electrodes, and a portion where an antenna electrode ANT is formed. Inner conductive members 63 are formed on the entire inner surfaces of the external coupling holes 72a and 72b and the lead through holes 73a and 73b. The inner conductive members 63 are electrically connected to the outer conductive member 65 at both ends of the external coupling holes 72a and 72b, and are electrically connected to the antenna electrode ANT at one end of each of the lead through holes 73a and 73b. Therefore, the external coupling holes 72a and 72b are electrically connected to the antenna electrode ANT through the lead through holes 73a and 73b, respectively. In the same way, an outer conductive member 65 is formed so as to cover the surfaces of the sintered dielectrics 81a and 81b except for the portions in contact with the dielectrics 71a to 71c.

As shown in Fig. 5, the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b are disposed between the resonators 61a, 61b, and 61c. The resonators 61a to 61c are bonded to the dielectric coupling windows 62a and 62b with insulating adhesive such as glass glaze applied to each contact surface to form the dielectric duplexer 60. The dielectric duplexer may be formed such that the sintered dielectrics 71a to 71c, 81a, and 81b are bonded together with insulating adhesive in advance to form a unit, and then the outer conductive member 65 is formed.

The dielectric duplexer 60 having the above structure includes a transmission filter (bandpass filter) 68A formed of the resonator 61a, the dielectric coupling window 62a, and almost the left-hand half of the resonator 61b, and a receiving filter (bandpass filter) 68B formed of the resonator 61c, the dielectric coupling window 62b, and almost the right-hand half of the resonator 61b. This dielectric duplexer 60 outputs a signal received from the antenna electrode ANT, through the receiving filter 68B from the receiving electrode Rx to a receiving circuit system not shown, as well as outputs a transmission signal input from a transmission circuit system not shown to the transmitting electrode Tx, through the transmission filter 68A to the antenna electrode ANT.

A dielectric filter and a dielectric duplexer according to the present invention is not limited to the above embodiments. It can be changed in various ways within

the scope of the invention.

- 5 In the first and second embodiments, the width W1 of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b is set equal to the width W2 of the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c. The setting of the widths is not limited to this case. As shown in Figs. 6 and 7, the width W1 of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b may be set smaller than the width W2 of the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c. Also in this case, since the dielectric constant of the dielectrics 21 which
- 10 form the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b has been made different from that of the dielectrics 11 which form the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c, the dielectric filter 10 having the same central frequency and a different pass-band width is obtained without changing the
- 15 shape and the dimensions of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b.

- 20 Electrically conductive adhesive such as silver paste and solder paste may be used to bond the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c to the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b in the second embodiment. In this case, as shown in Fig. 8, for example, electrically conductive adhesive 34 is applied to hatched areas, excluding circular windows 35, on both contact surfaces of each of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b. Through the circular windows 35, the resonators 1a, 1b, and 1c are electromagnetically coupled.
- 25

- 30 A dielectric coupling window may be provided with a coupling adjustment hole. Specifically, as shown in Fig. 9, in the dielectric filter 10 according to the first embodiment, coupling adjustment holes 15a and 15b are formed in the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b. The coupling adjustment holes 15a and 15b have a circular cross section and pass through from the upper surfaces to the lower surfaces of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b, respectively. Inner conductive members 17 (see Fig. 10) are formed on the entire inner walls of the coupling adjustment holes 15a and 15b.
- 35

- 40 Parts of the inner conductors 17 are removed to form no-inner-conductor portions 16a and 16b, and thereby characteristics such as a pass-band width are adjusted. Characteristics of the dielectric filter 10 such as a pass-band width are measured first. Then, according to the measurement results, as shown in Fig. 10, a cutting tool 18 such as a router is inserted into the coupling adjustment holes 15a and 15b through the openings of the holes 15a and 15b, and the desired parts of the inner conductors 17, which are exposed on the inner surfaces of the coupling adjustment holes 15a and 15b, are removed to form the no-inner-conductor portions 16a and 16b. Characteristics such as a pass-band width are adjusted by the sizes and positions of the no-inner-conductor portions 16a and 16b. Therefore, even after the dielectric filter 10 has been assembled, characteristics such as a pass-band width can be adjusted, further facilitating adjustment work.
- 45
- 50
- 55

The coupling adjustment holes 15a and 15b do not necessarily pass through from the upper surfaces to the lower surfaces of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and

2b. They may be holes passing through from the front side face to the back side face, or holes having their axes formed at angles against the outer surfaces of the dielectric coupling windows 2a and 2b. The coupling adjustment holes 15a and 15b may have a cross section 5  
of rectangles, instead of circles.

A three-stage dielectric filter in which three resonators are connected in series is described in the first and second embodiments. The number of stages is not limited to this case. It may be two, or four or more. 10

A dielectric filter of the present invention can have various shapes according to the specification. In addition to a rectangular cross section, the dielectric filter may have a circular cross section. It may be a coaxial line. 15

While the invention has been particularly shown and described with reference to preferred embodiments thereof, it will be understood by those skilled man in the art that the forgoing and other changes in form and details may be made therein without departing from the spirit of the invention. 20

### Claims

1. A dielectric filter (10) in which a plurality of TE-mode resonators (1a,b,c) are connected in series with a dielectric coupling window (2a,b) disposed therebetween,  
wherein the dielectric (11) constant of the dielectrics (11) which form said plurality of TE-mode resonators (1a,b,c) is different from that of the dielectric (21) which forms said dielectric coupling window (2a,b). 25
2. A dielectric duplexer (60) in which a plurality of TE-mode resonators (61a,b,c) are connected in series with a dielectric coupling window (62a,b) disposed therebetween,  
wherein the dielectric constant of the dielectrics (71a,b,c) which form said plurality of TE-mode resonators (61a,b,c) is different from that of the dielectric (81a,b) which forms said dielectric coupling window (62a,b). 30
3. A dielectric filter (10) for use as a dielectric duplexer (60) in which a plurality of TE-mode resonators (1a,b,c; 61a,b,c) are connected in series with a dielectric coupling window (2a,b; 62a,b) disposed therebetween,  
wherein the dielectric constant of the dielectrics (11; 71a,b,c,) which form said plurality of TE-mode resonators (1a,b,c; 61a,b,c) is different from that of the dielectric (21; 81a,b) which forms said dielectric coupling window (2a,b; 62a,b). 45

FIG.1

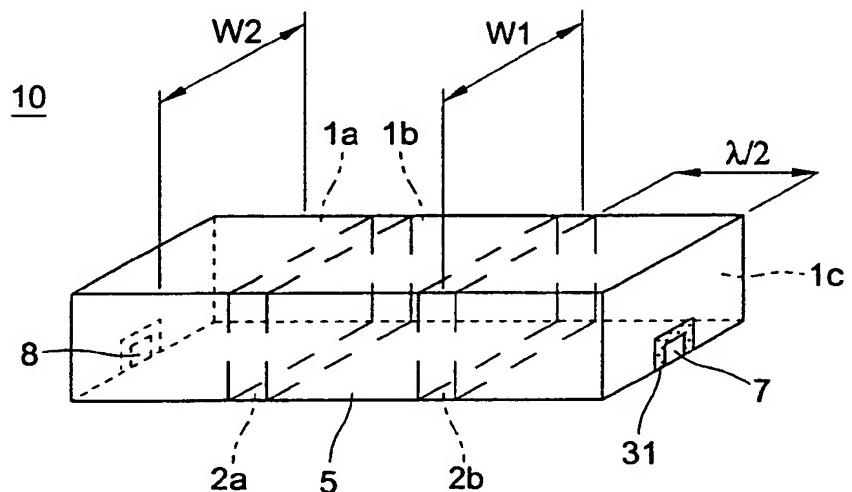
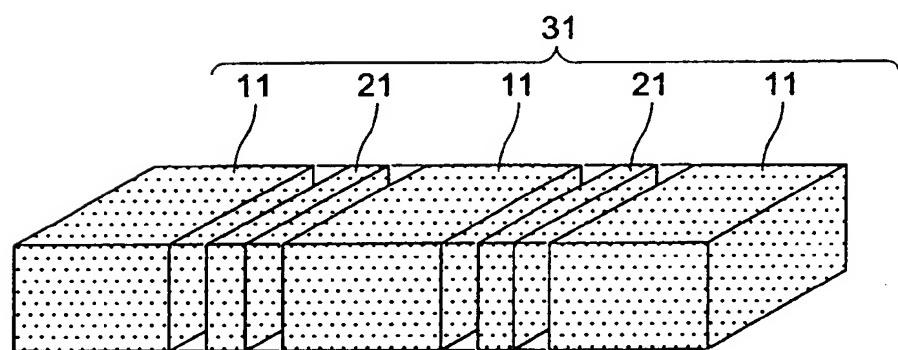
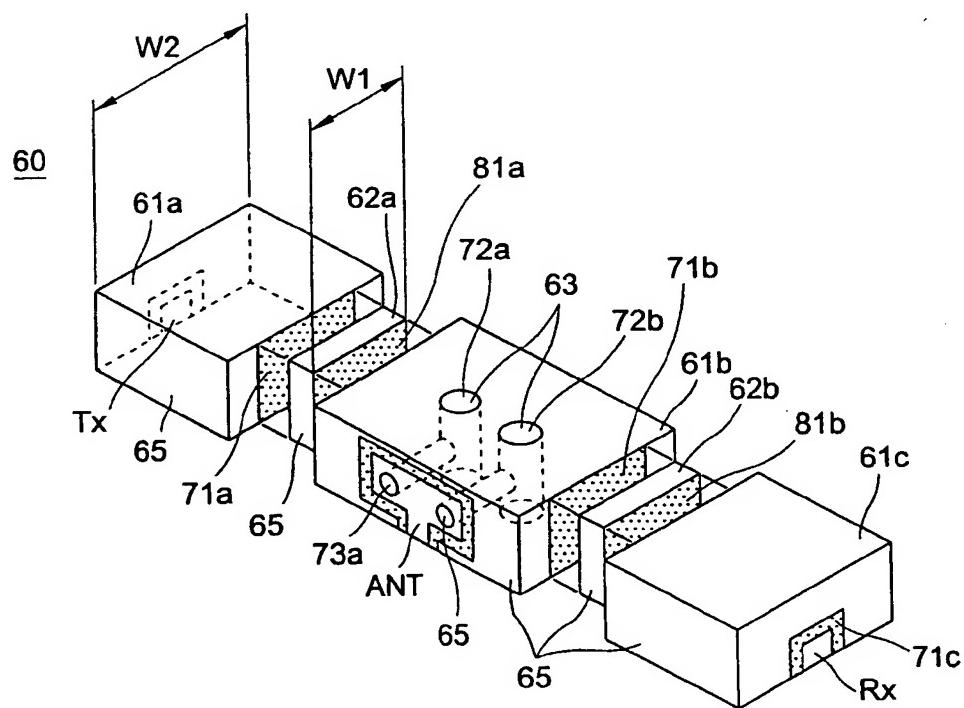
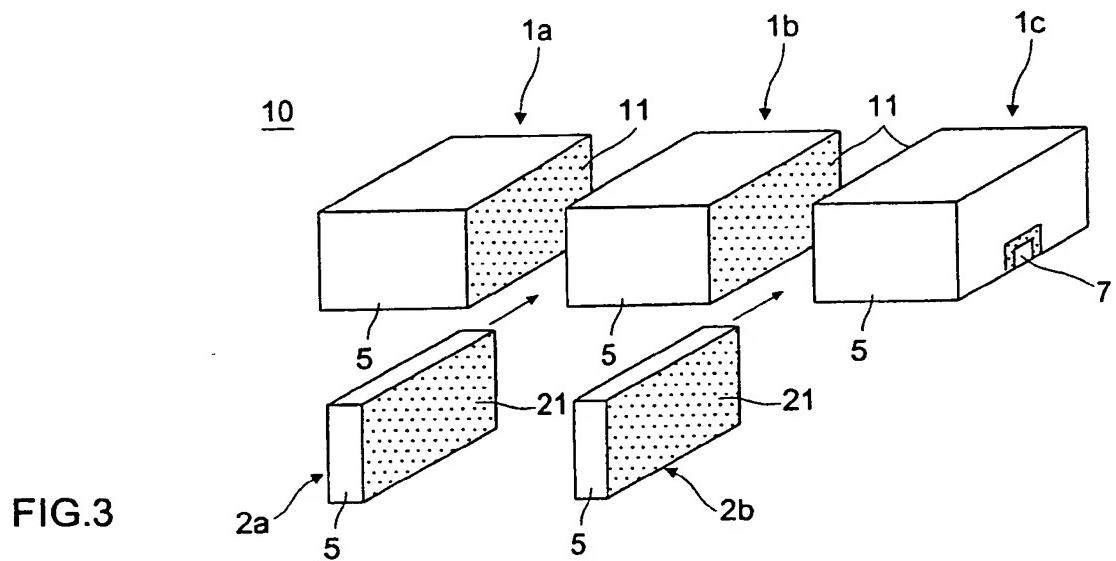


FIG.2





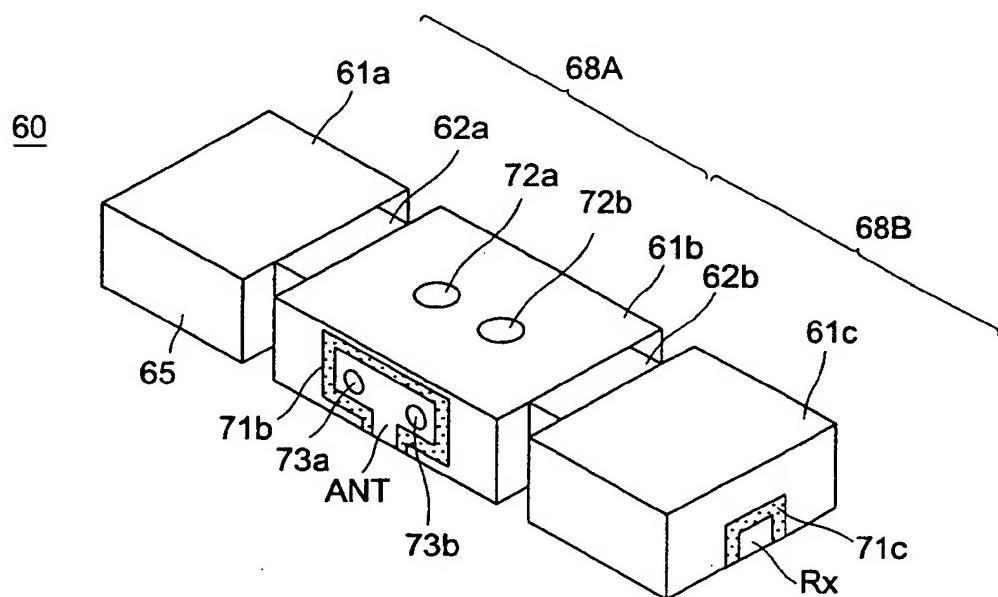


FIG.5

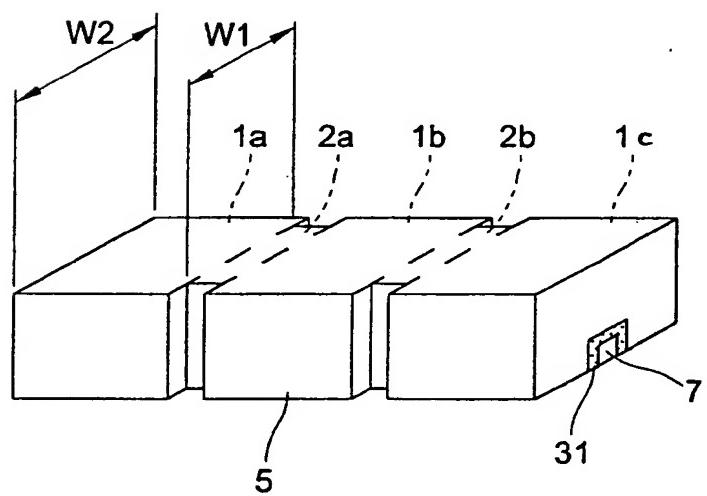


FIG.6

FIG.7

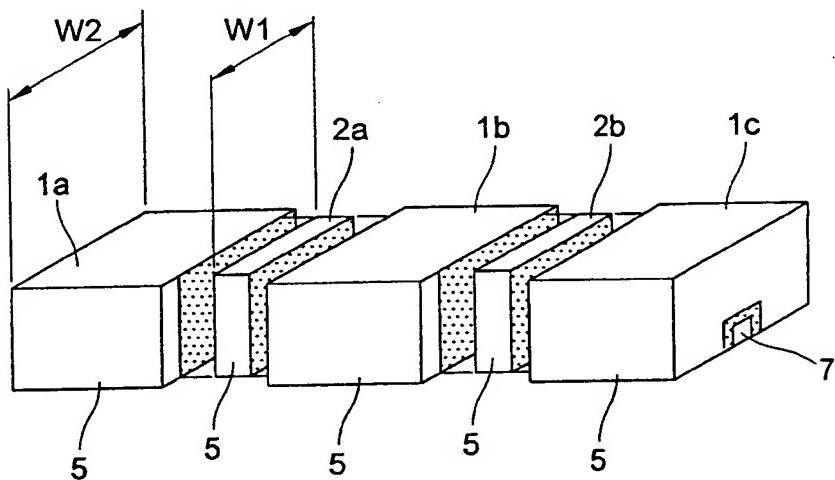


FIG.8

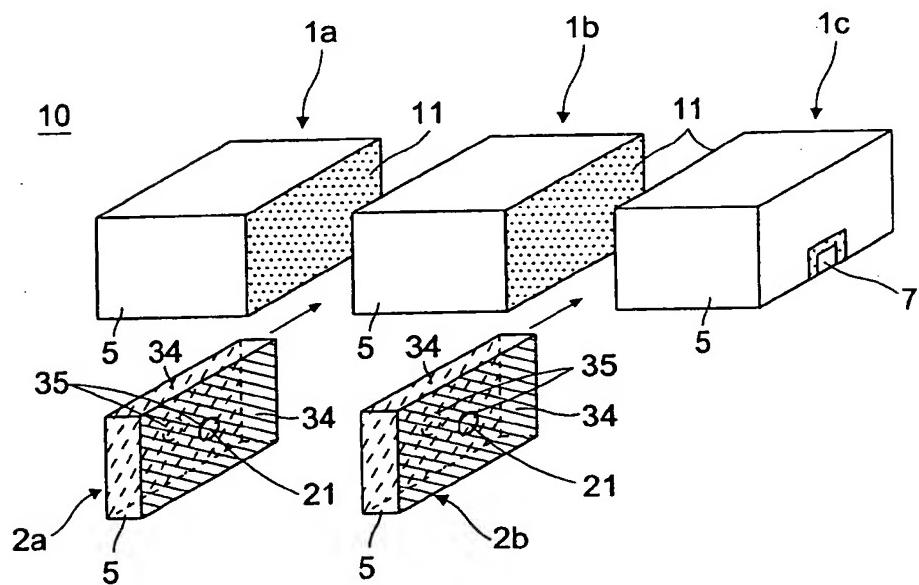


FIG.9

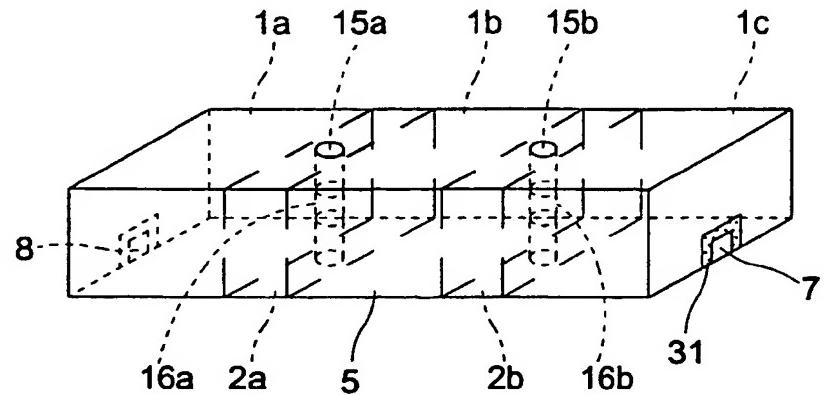


FIG.10

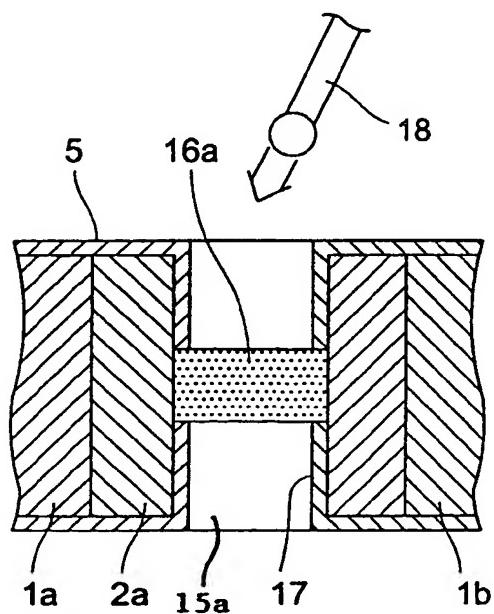
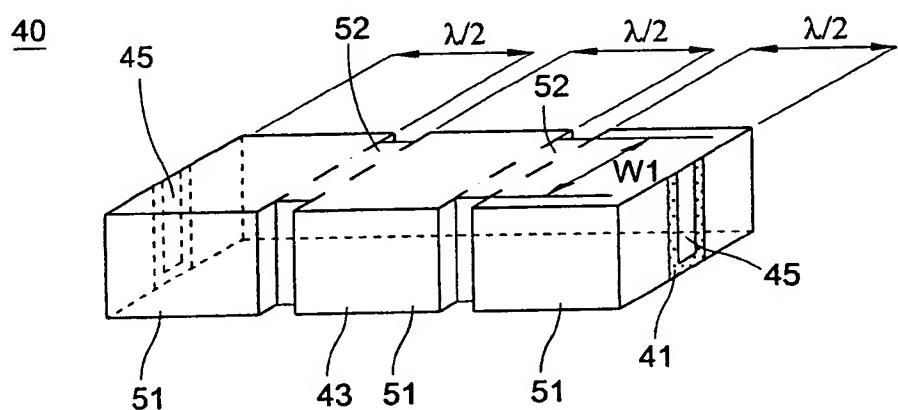


FIG.11



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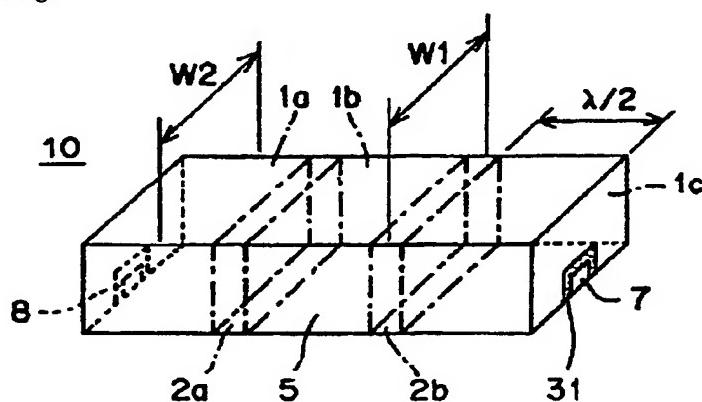
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tors (1a,b,c), the dielectric filter (10) having the same central frequency and a different pass-band width is manufactured without changing the shape and dimensions of the dielectric windows (2a,b).

Fig. 1





European Patent  
Office

## EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number

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DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.)						
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim							
X	<p>ABDELMONEM A ET AL: "SPURIOUS FREE D.R. TE MODE BAND PASS FILTER" IEEE MTT-S INTERNATIONAL MICROWAVE SYMPOSIUM DIGEST, US, NEW YORK, IEEE, 1994, pages 735-738, XP000516655 ISBN: 0-7803-1779-3 * the whole document *</p>	1-3	H01P1/208 H01P1/213						
A	<p>PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 013, no. 350 (E-800), 7 August 1989 (1989-08-07) &amp; JP 01 109902 A (MURATA MFG CO LTD), 26 April 1989 (1989-04-26) * abstract *</p>								
			TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.)						
			H01P						
<p>The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;">Place of search</td> <td style="width: 33%;">Date of completion of the search</td> <td style="width: 34%;">Examiner</td> </tr> <tr> <td>MUNICH</td> <td>4 May 2000</td> <td>La Casta Muñoz, S</td> </tr> </table>				Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner	MUNICH	4 May 2000	La Casta Muñoz, S
Place of search	Date of completion of the search	Examiner							
MUNICH	4 May 2000	La Casta Muñoz, S							
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS		<p>T : theory or principle underlying the invention          E : earlier patent document, but published on, or              after the filing date          D : document cited in the application          I : document cited for other reasons          &amp; : member of the same patent family, corresponding              document</p>							
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**ANNEX TO THE EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT  
ON EUROPEAN PATENT APPLICATION NO.**

EP 98 10 0871

This annex lists the patent family members relating to the patent documents cited in the above-mentioned European search report.  
The members are as contained in the European Patent Office EDP file on  
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04-05-2000

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
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